

THE NEW NEIGHBOR

By Katherine Howe

"Have you called on the new neighbors yet, mother?"

"No," answered Mrs. Kirk. "And I don't think I shall be in a hurry to do so."

Ogden Kirk looked up in a mystified, questioning way. It was his first week-end visit to the new country home where he and his mother expected to spend the summer. He had hoped that their nearest neighbor in the small house, whose lawn adjoined theirs, would prove companionable to his mother, as she had no acquaintances in the neighborhood.

"What's the matter?"

"Well, I haven't quite made out myself. All I can say, it's queer."

"What's queer?"

"The goings-on over there. I have seen no one about but a young girl, a grim-looking old woman and a scrub woman who came in to clean. Yesterday the shrieks and moans and maniacal laughter were enough to curdle your blood. I was almost on the point of going over to see what was the matter, when I noticed the old woman outside, calmly weeding a flower bed, so I thought if she was so unconcerned over it, I would better stay home. My solicitude would probably be resented."

"Do you suppose," queried the young man, "she has fits of insanity?"

"It must be either that or hysterics. At any rate, it's uncomfortable and creepy. If I had known I was moving next door to a private asylum I would have gone somewhere else."

"I suppose the old woman is an attendant or some sort of keeper for the young lady. Too bad, isn't it?"

"I should think so."

Mrs. Kirk's tone was sharply emphatic. She was evidently thinking

of her own annoyance rather than the plight of the girl which had been uppermost in her son's mind.

"Perhaps," he soothed, "it is only temporary and won't go on long."

"Perhaps," she assented, "But if it does—"

"Well, we will see," he said.

The next Saturday when young Kirk arrived he jerked a significant



There Was No Sound of Human Company.

finger toward their neighbor and asked: "What about it?"

"She's had two or three attacks this week; goes on just about the same way."

"I wonder if she is insane."

"Well, a doctor has been there twice this week."

"How do you know it was a doctor?"